

EXPORTING MANGOS TO CANADA

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We have been exporting mangos to Canada for about 15 years. In the beginning there was no competition from Mexico or Florida, and we shipped a lot more then. Nowadays we only ship ripe mango when it is off-season for Mexico and Florida. We ship a lot of green mango to Vancouver, which has a large ethnic market. We prefer to ship green mango, because it does not bruise and get damaged as readily as ripe mango. Freight to Canada is about 28-35¢ per pound, depending on how much you ship. These days we never ship full LD3 containers of mangos to Canada; they are always mixed with other produce such as papaya, taro, or herbs. We ship mangos to Hong Kong, but they only take the 'Pirie' variety, and we cannot get a lot of 'Pirie'. Whenever we ship to Hong Kong, we ship mangos and papayas.

Q: When you ship green mangos, do you ship certain varieties of mango or just common green?

A: We ship the 'Chinese' variety, which is available sporadically, and during 'Haden' season we try to get the immature, smaller 'Haden', because when it gets bigger the flesh gets yellow, and they can't use it; they like it solid green. We ship year-round.

Q: What is the freight to Hong Kong?

A: We get a good freight, about 40¢ per pound LD3 rate, because when they fly back they carry next to no cargo. They may be losing money at 40¢, but they would rather have that than nothing. They charge us per case, \$4.00 per case, so the freight per LD3 varies.

Q: What are green mangos being used for?

A: Mostly they pickle it. The West Indians chop it up and use it in cooking and mixed in salads. They like green 'Haden' because it is less fibrous than 'Chinese'. Mexico doesn't ship green mangos, so even when they are shipping ripe mangos to Vancouver, we still can ship 1,000-2,000 pounds a week of green mangos.

Q: What growth stage is "green" mango?

A: Not full size; about halfway developed, as immature as possible. We get them mostly from

backyard growers. We belong to the Hawaii Tropical Fruit Co-op, and some of our growers have mangos. Last year 'Haden' was really plentiful, and the price was better for green than for ripe, so we asked growers to harvest earlier.

Q: Is the price for green mango stable through the year?

A: During the off-season we pay maybe 60, 70¢ for 'Chinese' mango, and anywhere from 40 to 50¢ for 'Haden'. We also buy from what Ron Yamauchi calls "opportunistic harvesters," because there are not that many commercial farms producing mangos.

Q: Do you ship mixed containers because of demand constraints?

A: No, it's supply. We never have problems selling green mango.

Q: What is the net weight on an LD3?

A: The maximum is 3,200 lb, but on a mixed load you get maybe 2,000. Straight papayas or mangos would be about 2,500.

Q: What is the shelf life of green mangos?

A: They have a good shelf life, maybe 10 days after they arrive, if you don't chill them. If you chill them, they get soft. They ship well and do not require as much care in packing as ripe. We ship ripe mangos in 10-lb boxes, but the green ones can be shipped in 30-lb ginger boxes.

Q: Do you ship to other places in Canada besides Vancouver?

A: Calgary and Edmonton take a little. There are a lot of West Indians and Vietnamese in Vancouver. The market in Canada is getting bigger. There is immigration from Hong Kong, and the Chinese population is growing, especially around Toronto. Hong Kong people like the smell and color of 'Pirie' mangos, but they don't like 'Haden' at all. There is no quarantine restriction to Canada. During the summer Canadian Air restricts us to a certain allotment of container space per day. It may be hard to get space if you do not have a year-round relationship with the carrier. Continental also flies to Vancouver.